



IMPACT OF GENDER BUDGETING ON GDI AND GENDER EQUALITY TOWARDS ACHIEVING SDG 5 IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Societies from all across the world have been witnessing the propagation and undertaking of countless detriments and pessimistic practices since time immemorial, that have been seriously hindering their development. The practice of Gender discrimination is one such practice that has been latching onto the roots of societies for a substantial while now. It is severely hindering the overall upliftment and empowerment of Women from all across the globe. Of late, Numerous attempts are being made to curb this challenge, one prominent illustration being the adoption of this ideology of eradication as a Sustainable development goal, i.e., SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). The achievement of the goal may be facilitated by a diverse range of approaches, while this study focuses upon one such effective approach; Gender Budgeting. Gender Budgeting inculcates a number of aspects, of which, the crucial ones are shortlisted for analysis, viz., Health, education and employment. With the objectives of evaluating the various aspects of Gender Budgeting and their impact on the changing GDI and the significance of these approaches in fostering the attainment of SDG:5, this paper simultaneously utilizes quantitative approach and data driven research to extract requisite observations citing optimistic ramifications with regards to expenditure trends. Subsequently, the trend of Gender Development Index is simultaneously analysed to obtain appropriate conclusions citing a non-reflective situation, wherein the impacts of incremented expenditures levy minimal impact on the GDI. In termination, relevant suggestions are outlined to address the observed challenges.

KEYWORDS: Gender Disparity, Gender Budgeting, Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Development Index

1. INTRODUCTION

Societies from all across the world have been witnessing the propagation and undertaking of countless detriments and pessimistic practices since time immemorial, that have been seriously hindering their development. The practice of Gender discrimination is one such practice that has been latching onto the roots of societies for a substantial while now. Of late, numerous attempts have been made to eradicate and eliminate it, one prominent illustration being the adoption of this ideology of eradication as a Sustainable development goal, i.e., SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). Amongst the various approaches that may potentially aid in the achievement of this goal, the theme of Gender Budgeting withholds immense potential and prominence in the concurrent times. This subject-matter involves utilizing a nation's budget as an instrument to facilitate the eradication of gender inequality by diverting necessary and requisite economic resources into operation. Though gender budgeting involves a wide-array of subject-matters, the prominent ones include the aspects of Health, Education and employment/income disparity. Under the limelight of Gender-budgeting, the expenditure trends and formulation of women centric policy concerning these sectors shall be the key parameters under focus. Subsequent analysis shall involve the evaluation of improvements or deteriorations in the trends of the Gender Development Index (GDI), which shall vividly reflect and indicate the nature of effectiveness of the principles and policies that are being undertaken under

Gender Budgeting. In condensation, this analysis shall unveil the possibilities, prospects, implications and the necessary actions that needs to be undertaken, if any, so as to boost the proficiency and efficacy of gender budgeting in achievement of SDG5.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Gender budgeting has significantly been deliberated upon since a substantial while now, wherein the various aspects of gender budgeting have been evaluated in the light of reducing gender disparity. To illustrate, study by (Del Gesso, 2019) aiming to examine the integration of the gender perspective into the budgetary cycle of Italian regional governments, outlined four key thematic areas that are relevant across various sectors and need to be addressed with a focus on gender considerations. These included, the encouragement of women's employment, the promotion of equal gender opportunities, the enhancement of social inclusion, and the combatting of gender-based violence. It is claimed that, Gender budgeting holds significant promise in advancing the United Nations 2030 Agenda, particularly in terms of promoting gender equality and empowering women. If the Indian Experience is taken into account, in accordance to (Kumari, 2024), Gender Budgeting was introduced in India as early as 2005, with Bihar among the first states to adopt it in 2008-09. They assert that the Government of Bihar have taken different initiatives in Budget allocation to improve the condition of women and reduce

gender gaps to ensure gender equality, which shall however not suffice. To actually realise the benefits of these initiatives, policies have to be coupled with greater emphasis being levied upon creating awareness among the masses in general and women in particular so that they may be aware of their valuable rights. In condensation, the importance and necessity of gender budgeting in modern times is adequately being evaluated upon. However, discussions concerning the relation between Gender budgeting and SDG:5 with special emphasis upon GDI still remains remarkably deficient which gives rise to a potential research gap whose fulfilment is what is aimed by this research paper, bearing the objective of analysing the impact of Gender budgeting on SDG:5, with special emphasis to GDI .

3. OBJECTIVES

- I. To evaluate the various aspects of Gender Budgeting and their impact on the changing GDI
- II. The evaluate the significance of these approaches in fostering the attainment of SDG:5

4. METHODOLOGY

This research paper aims to evaluate the impact of Gender Budgeting on GDI and Gender equality towards achievement of SDG:5

For research purpose there is a use of both quantitative approach for facts and data driven research to identify the trends over time. Secondary data is also used along with primary data with necessary precautions to avoid any possible sampling errors being undertaken. To serve the purpose of analysing the collected data for deriving appropriate results, the Microsoft Excel has been utilised to perform and compute requisite operations. They included utilization of appropriate graphs for the purpose of analysis.

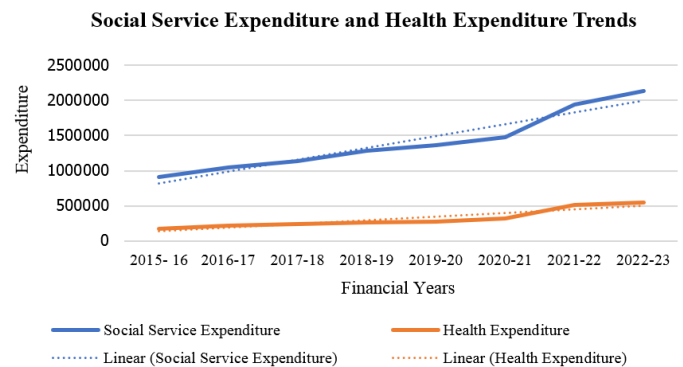
5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The analysis of the vital aspects of gender budgeting, viz. Health, education and income shall reveal the overall potential effectiveness of this approach and its potential impact on the GDI of a country and the expected progression towards the achievement of SDG:5.

a. Health

If the health sector is taken into consideration, the expenditure trends of the government of India on the health sector is worth evaluating.

DIAGRAM: 1.1

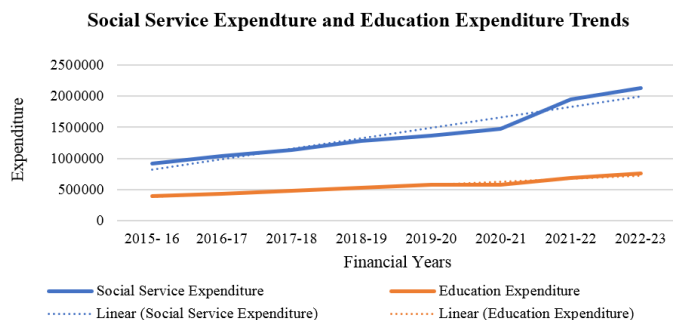


The diagram vividly indicates that the expenditure of the government on social services has been witnessing an almost steady incremental trend since FY 2015-16, with occasional dips. The same can be observed in the case of health expenditure, which too has registered a significantly steady incremental trend, though the scale of increment is milder as compared to the total expenditure increments. This leaves significant potentials untouched as diversion of an augmented proportion of the increments in Social service expenditure to the health sector shall facilitate to realise much greater benefits. However, the expenditure scales have still improved from the initial FY 2015-2016 with regards to FY 2022-23. Furthermore, out of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) as a percentage of Total Health Expenditure has declined substantially from 64.2 per cent in FY14 to 48.2 per cent in FY19. These developments are validated by the introduction of numerous health policies and improvements of health infrastructure. (HealthWorld.com, 2024) vividly asserts that, “The rise in public healthcare spending is a direct result of initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, which provides Rs 5 lakh of insurance coverage to over 50 crore people in India, and the increased investment in public health infrastructure and preventive care.”, wherein a notable majority of these policies focus on women. For instance, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), which is a key component of Ayushman Bharat initiative, provides comprehensive maternity care, including institutional deliveries, prenatal and postnatal care, complications during childbirth, and new-born care, with health insurance coverage up to Rs. 5 lakh per family per year. Under the Ayushman Bharat initiative, Health and Wellness centres are setup which provide essential maternal and child healthcare, cancer screenings, and family planning services, primarily benefiting women, especially in rural areas with limited healthcare access. The funding of these initiatives is one of the most crucial aspect of gender budgeting with special allusion to the health sector.

b. Education

Education is another vital sector that withholds immense significance in the aspect of Gender Budgeting. Improvements in Education status of women shall facilitate greater equality and ease in the reduction and elimination of gender disparity. The expenditure trend focusing the education sector is demonstrated via the following diagram:

DIAGRAM: 1.2

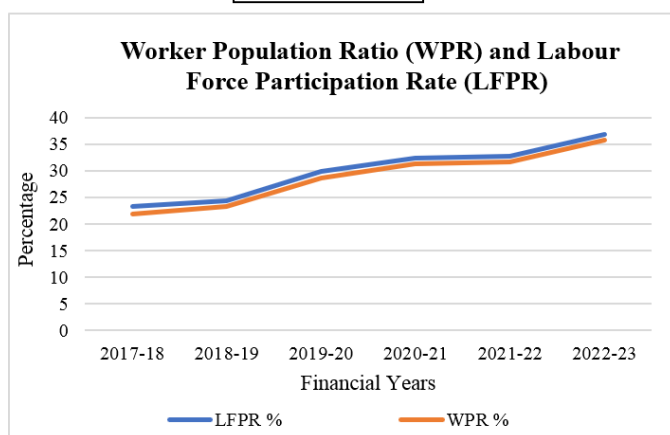


The diagram indicates that the expenditure on education has registered significant increments simultaneously with the increment in social service expenditure. However, this increment seems to be significantly milder and to cast a more severely optimistic impact, the scale of increments has to escalate at a much exponential rate. Though the rate of escalation should've been much more proficient, these increments have positively facilitated the introduction of numerous policies aiming at reducing gender disparity. For instance, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme launched in 2015 exclusively aims at addressing the declining child sex ratio and promote girls' education. It focuses on ensuring girls' empowerment through education, awareness, and improving the child sex ratio. The Pradhan Mantri Kanya Shikshan Yojana (PMKSY) was introduced in 2016 which encourage girls from marginalized backgrounds to continue their education beyond the primary level. This scheme introduces scholarships for girls from economically disadvantaged families, offers financial assistance to help girls complete secondary and higher secondary education, and emphasizes increasing the participation of girls from rural and underserved regions in education and skill development initiatives. The National education policy (2020), exclusively aims at a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central government and all State Governments to reach 6% of GDP and fosters numerous initiatives aimed at addressing gender disparity like the introduction of Gender Inclusion Fund (GIF) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas (KGBVs).

c. Women Employment

Employment is often regarded as a vital instrument to tackle and eliminate gender disparity as enhancements in employment rates of women shall imply their empowerment which shall in turn foster greater equality. The key parameters shall be observed are Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR). The LFPR for women represents the proportion of women in the working-age group (usually between 15 and 64 years) who are either currently employed or actively looking for employment and The WPR for women denotes the proportion of women in the overall population (typically aged 15 and above) who are involved in work, regardless of whether it's paid or unpaid. This encompasses employed women, as well as those who are self-employed or involved in domestic work. Let us observe the requisite trends:

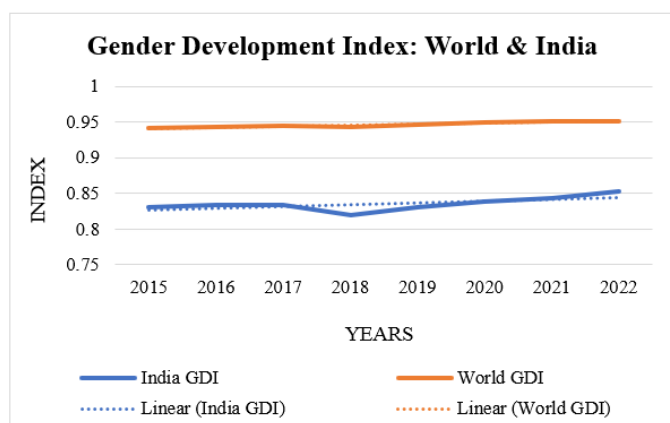
DIAGRAM: 1.3



The diagram reveals a positive trend of both LFPR and WPR with significant surges over the 6 years period. This indicates that a larger proportion of women are participating in the labour force which implies that the presence of ideal employment dynamics. This is fueled by the numerous initiatives undertaken by the government like The Code on Social Security, 2020, which extends paid maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks, requires crèche facilities in workplaces with 50 or more employees, and allows women to work night shifts with appropriate safety measures, The Code on Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions (OSH), 2020 allows women to work in aboveground mines between 7 pm and 6 am, and in belowground mines from 6 am to 7 pm for technical, supervisory, and managerial positions where continuous presence is not required. The Code on Wages, 2019 ensures equal pay for men and women performing the same or similar work and prohibits gender-based discrimination in hiring, except in cases where women's employment is restricted by law. Other initiatives like Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbharNidhi (PM SVANidhi Scheme), Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) etc, too support this initiative.

Subsequently, the tangible impact that these developments have casted can be assessed by the observation of an appropriate index. The most suitable one shall be the Gender Development Index (GDI). GDI is a measure developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assess gender inequality in a country. The GDI is calculated based upon three indicators which are Life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita. Each of these parameters cater to health, education and employment aspects respectively which has been formerly evaluated & deliberated upon. The trends of GDI of India and world is to be observed to extract the requisite outcomes.

DIAGRAM: 1.3



Source: Human development reports, UNDP

The GDI values of the world closely revolve around 0.95 with minimal or negligible expectations to rise in the foreseen future. This can be attributed to the fact that societies from all across the world are subjected to numerous bottlenecks which shall limit the achievement of perfect equality. The bottlenecks may include the persistent practice of patriarchal norms and customs whose eradication is severely challenging. However, still the world average is quite optimistic and the persistent stability in the trend of the values is an affirmative endeavour. With special allusion to India, the GDI values are still below the world averages and coupled with the absence of any expectation to rise in the foreseen future, casts as a significant setback. However, if the actual value is emphasized upon, the values are persistently above 0.8 which is an optimistic indication of the presence of significant equality though not perfect. Nevertheless, India has witnessed the introduction and implementation of numerous policies and schemes post 2015 that have aimed to raise the status of equality amongst the gender, though this is not what the GDI values reflect, as they have been approximately steady throughout the observed timeline, however with a noteworthy dip in 2018 that was nonetheless recovered in the subsequent years. This could be attributed to the presence of severe bottlenecks that are limiting the impact of the implemented policies. Though the statistics may suggest the presence of adequate policies, the argument that demands attention is that is the benefit actually tripping down from the theories to the practical reality or not. If the benefits of the policies are being detained to mere theory, then though the statistics may suggest development, the practical scenario shall indicate otherwise.

As far as the subject of SDG:5 is concerned, the above discussed policies that have been formulated and implemented are crucial and suitable to foster the attainment of SDG:5. However, progressions and achievement of this goal shall be vividly indicated by the improving GDI which however, seems to be stagnant as of now. Thus, though the policies may seem perfect and suitable to foster SDG:5 in theory, the same cannot be claimed for practical terms. These may be owed to the presence of severe hindrances and bottlenecks like operational inefficiencies, lack of awareness, misuse of funds etc. Subjected to the fact that these obstacles are eradicated,

the policies shall function effortlessly and foster the steady and seamless achievement of SDG:5 in India.

6. CONCLUSION

The issue of gender disparity remains persistent today. Women from various societies are still subjected to gender based discrimination even today. Amidst this, the promising update lies in the fact that this social issue is being adequately recognised and addressed, which is the foremost step in resolving a problem. Women seems to face noteworthy discrimination in some of the most crucial aspects of human life, which include health, education and employment. Given that this disparity persists, it shall severely hinder the establishment of a gender neutral society. With special allusion to India, numerous attempts are being in establishing equality in these sectors in form of enhanced expenditure that is fuelling the implementation of several key policies aiming to eradicate disparities. However, has been observed that the efficiency and effectiveness of these policies remains questionable as the expected outcome of these policies are not being reflected by the measurement indices. This may be owed to structural flaws and bottlenecks which have to eliminated to realise optimized outcomes. It is worth noting that introducing and implementing policies is just one approach to tackle this issue, which is not adequate. Simultaneously, attempts have to be made to reform the fundamental structure and mindset of the society from Patriarchal to a more gender neutral one. These changes coupled with adequate policy backup shall facilitate effortless achievement of gender equality which is also the ultimate aim of the Sustainable development Goal 5.

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